

HE SAW 'FIREFLIES,' TOO

By WILLIAM HINES
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If U-2 Pilot Francis Gary Powers didn't tell the Russians more about the spy business than Cosmonaut Gherman S. Titov told yesterday about the space business, the Central Intelligence Agency has nothing to worry about.

Maj. Titov, holder of the world's record for time in orbit, met the press for an hour at the Soviet Embassy yesterday. He easily, even off-handedly, lived up to Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin's prediction that "he will be able to withstand your most loaded questions."

The consensus was that if the short, wiry, 27-year-old pilot is the archetype of the New Soviet Man, then the N.S.M. is a very cool cookie, indeed. Only once did Maj. Titov lose his composure, and that was when he spotted a photographer lying prone on the floor, intent on getting a picture with just that certain angle.

He broke up.

Otherwise he was imperturbable, fielding all questions with aplomb, answering (and not-answering) just as much as his conscience and the party-line prescribed, and getting in a few healthy propaganda licks for such Soviet pet projects as disarmament.

More than 150 news repre-

sentatives jammed a second-floor parlor to trade question-and-answer thrusts with the Soviet spaceman.

Comparisons between spacemen of the Soviet and American varieties were inevitable. Political orientation aside, it was obvious that a cosmic pilot of whatever nationality was likely to be a quick thinker. Like Lt. Col. John H. Glenn, Maj. Titov proved to be a man of ready wit.

A reporter asked whether the next Russian in orbit would be a small man like the 5-foot-4 cosmonaut. He responded with a grin that obviously a five-ton spaceship can carry a big man, and that small ones are chosen because people like to have their pictures taken with cosmonauts.

If a cosmonaut were the size of Ambassador Anatoly Dobrynin (a six-footer), Maj. Titov explained, people behind him wouldn't be able to be seen in the picture.

Another reporter quizzed him about the "cosmic fireflies" which Col. Glenn reported seeing February 20 and which Maj. Titov said yesterday he, too, had seen. The reporter recalled that a space agency study had laid the firefly phenomenon on bits of paint flaking off the Friendship-7 cap-



GHERMAN TITOV
—AP Photo

sule, a theory Col. Glenn disputes.

Maj. Titov replied thoughtfully that he believed the snow-like flecks were created by rocket fuel. Then, with a twinkle in his blue eyes, he added:

"From my ship Vostok-2, I'm quite sure the paint was not peeling."

He was asked if he thought

the day would come when Soviet and American spacemen would share the same capsule on a trip to the moon. He found in this question a propaganda opening big enough to drive a Stalin tank through.

"I don't know whether they will fly to the moon or further, but I'm sure they'll fly," he replied. "And as far as the time is concerned, I'll tell you it will be sooner if our countries come to an agreement to prohibit war — to disarm."

"Then our countries will have the opportunity to send men into space. . . . The pilot may be the representative of one country—"

"The Soviet Union," Ambassador Dobrynin, seated at Maj. Titov's side, interjected.

Maj. Titov's non-answers to technical questions were conceded to be masterpieces. A few were brushed aside with the phrase, "It is of no importance." But most were accorded thoughtful, courteous, detailed non-answers. The fact that communication was filtered through an interpreter with a less-than-perfect command of English apparently helped, too.

He sidestepped questions about the seasickness reported one-third of the way through his 25-hour flight last August 6-7. "The person who told you

about it apparently flew with me," he said sarcastically. "It was in bad taste. My condition was not bad."

He avoided discussions of cosmonaut training and the numbers of men involved. "Before the flight of Gagarin we had more than a million applications for flight," he said. "But now the number of applications has been decreased because people have seen that the training is very hard. Anyway, I think it is of no importance. For the next flight the cosmonaut is ready."

Other substantive questions received similar treatment. And always Maj. Titov returned to the main theme: disarm first, co-operate in space later.

Would he go to Cape Canaveral, or had he asked to go?

"I think we have not yet reached the level of conditions that will allow us to see military rockets. We must have disarmament."

An hour and two minutes after the conference began, Ambassador Dobrynin ended it with the promise that Maj. Titov will meet the press again (the next time this evening at the National Academy of Sciences). The TV lights went out, the crowd of newsmen milled around, and Maj. Titov left the conference room with neither a hair nor a space-secret out of place.